

- b) at least two laterally adjacent modular units, each of said modular units comprising:
 - i) a plurality of cartridge receiving devices;
 - ii) a first elongate gear rack having first and second ends and aligned along a displacement path;
 - iii) a first elongate guide member formed as a single unit with said first elongate gear rack and extending along the displacement path substantially between the first and second ends of said first elongate gear rack;
 - iv) a first bearing mounted to the cartridge access device, said first bearing engaging said first elongate guide member;
 - v) a second elongate gear rack aligned along said displacement path and positioned in spaced-apart relation to said first elongate gear rack; and
 - vi) wherein the first elongate gear racks of said laterally adjacent modular units are substantially in alignment with one another, and the second elongate gear racks of said laterally adjacent modular units are substantially in alignment with one another, such that said cartridge access device may be translated among said laterally adjacent modular units;
- c) a translation apparatus for moving a cartridge access device along a displacement path, comprising:
 - i) a first drive pinion mounted to the cartridge access device, said first drive pinion

engaging said first elongate gear rack;
ii) a second drive pinion mounted to the cartridge access device, said second drive pinion engaging said second elongate gear rack; and
iii) a pinion drive apparatus operatively associated with said first and second drive pinions, said pinion drive apparatus rotating said first and second drive pinions to move the cartridge access device among the first and second elongate gear racks of said laterally adjacent modular units.

11. (Twice Amended) A modular data storage system for handling and storing data cartridges, comprising:

a) a cartridge access device;
b) a master modular unit and at least one slave modular unit, each of said modular units being positioned adjacent one another to form laterally adjacent modular units, each of said modular units comprising:

i) a plurality of cartridge receiving devices;
ii) a first elongate gear rack having first and second ends and aligned along a displacement path;
iii) a first elongate guide member formed as a single unit with said first elongate gear rack and extending along the displacement path substantially between the first and second ends of said first elongate gear rack;
iv) a first bearing mounted to the cartridge

access device, said first bearing engaging said first elongate guide member;

v) a second elongate gear rack aligned along said displacement path and positioned in spaced-apart relation to said first elongate gear rack; and

vi) wherein the first elongate gear racks of said laterally adjacent modular units are substantially in alignment with one another, and the second elongate gear racks of said laterally adjacent modular units are substantially in alignment with one another, such that said cartridge access device may be translated among said laterally adjacent modular units;

c) a translation apparatus for moving a cartridge access device along a displacement path, comprising:

i) a first drive pinion mounted to the cartridge access device, said first drive pinion engaging said first elongate gear rack;

ii) a second drive pinion mounted to the cartridge access device, said second drive pinion engaging said second elongate gear rack; and

iii) a pinion drive apparatus operatively associated with said first and second drive pinions, said pinion drive apparatus rotating said first and second drive pinions to move the cartridge access device among the first and second elongate gear racks of said laterally adjacent modular units;

d) said master modular unit further comprising a

power supply.

23. (Amended) A modular data storage system for handling and storing data cartridges, comprising:

- a) a cartridge access device;
- b) at least two laterally adjacent modular units, each of said modular units comprising:
 - i) a plurality of cartridge receiving devices; and
 - ii) an elongate gear rack aligned along a displacement path;
- c) a translation apparatus for moving a cartridge access device along a displacement path, comprising:
 - i) guide means formed as a single unit with said elongate gear rack for guiding the cartridge access device along said displacement path;
 - ii) a drive pinion mounted to the cartridge access device, said drive pinion engaging said elongate gear rack; and
 - iii) pinion drive means operatively associated with said drive pinion for rotating said first drive pinion to move the cartridge access device along the displacement path;
- d) wherein said elongate gear racks of said laterally adjacent modular units are substantially in alignment with one another such that said cartridge access device may be translated among said laterally adjacent modular units.